

*Mehy*

**EYES ONLY**

**February 22, 1969**

**TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE**

**MEMORANDUM FOR:**

**Honorable Melvin R. Laird  
Secretary of Defense  
Washington, D. C.**

**FROM:**

**Henry A. Kissinger**

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

**SUBJECT:**

**COSVN Matter**

The President has approved my memorandum of February 19 outlining the proposed course of action associated with a contingency B-52 strike against COSVN Headquarters in Cambodia. Attached for your eyes only is an excerpt copy of the recommendations in this memorandum which has been approved by the President. You will note that the scenario provides for two immediate steps:

1. The immediate dispatch of a message to General Abrams authorizing him to conduct B-52 strikes right up to the Cambodian border on the South Vietnamese side in the Fish-hook area of III Corps tactical zone.

2. Concurrently, a strictly military back channel, eyes only message for General Abrams should be dispatched advising General Abrams to continue planning for execution of the strike on a contingency basis. Specifically, General Abrams should be advised to maintain a continual appraisal of the tactical situation in the III Corps tactical zone with the view towards advising us as soon as the military situation might arise which would justify the contingency strike in accordance with paragraph 3 of the attached recommendations.

I contemplate that should a sizable enemy attack develop in the III Corps area in the vicinity of the Fish-hook that highest

OSD Review Completed

**TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE**

**TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE**

**-2-**

authority will approve the COSVN strike based upon the recommendations of General Abrams and an overall assessment of the military situation elsewhere in Vietnam. In order to set the stage for this contingency, it is essential that you stand ready during the President's trip to Europe to execute this attack option with minimum prior notice.

**Attachment**

**TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

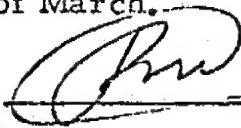
1. In order to set the stage for a possible covert attack, and clear the books on this matter within the Bureaucracy, we should send a message to General Abrams authorizing him to bomb right up to the Cambodian border in the Fish-hook area of III Corps Tactical Zone.

2. General Abrams be authorized to continue planning for execution of the strike on a contingency basis.

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

3. If a suitable local action develops in the III Corps Tactical Zone in the vicinity of the Fish-hook, that with your approval at the time we use it as a pretext to strike COSVN Headquarters.

4. If no suitable local action develops, that we again consider the proposal toward the end of March.

Approve 

Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_